

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 PM-05
INRE-00 SS-15 L-03 ACDA-12 MCE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
TRSE-00 SOE-02 DOE-11 CIAE-00 COME-00 /079 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5279

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 01610

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, MASS, GW, KS, US

SUBJECT: FRG REQUEST FOR US VIEWS ON PROPOSAL TO
ESTABLISH TANK FACTORY IN SOUTH KOREA

1. THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY A PRIVATE
GERMAN FIRM (UNNAMED) AND ASKED WHAT ITS ATTITUDE WOULD
BE TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FACTORY TO PRODUCE TANKS
IN SOUTH KOREA. THE COMPANY ENVISAGES A TOTAL PRODUCTION
OF 600-800 MEDIUM TANKS (A "NEW EDITION" OF APPROXI-
MATELY 30 TONS WHICH WOULD NOT INCORPORATE ANY SENSITIVE
TECHNOLOGY).

2. ACCORDING TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, THE FMOD AND FOREIGN
OFFICE ARE GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE MATTER.
FINAL APPROVAL, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO BE GIVEN BY THE
FEDERAL DEFENSE COUNCIL. ONE OF THE ELEMENTS IN THE
DECISION, WE ARE TOLD, WOULD BE US ATTITUDE TOWARD THE
PROJECT. FOR THIS REASON, THE FOREIGN OFFICE HOPED TO
GET A RESPONSE FROM US BEFORE MAKING ITS POLICY RECOM-
MENDATIONS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

3. THE GERMAN FIRM WOULD PROVIDE THE SOUTH KOREANS WITH
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, BLUEPRINTS, AND SOME MANUFACTURING
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EQUIPMENT. IN THE EARLY STAGES, SOME COMPONENTS AND/OR
SPARE PARTS MIGHT BE CALLED FOR FROM FRG SOURCES, BUT
THE OPERATION WOULD BE WHOLLY KOREAN-OWNED AND OPERATED.
BECAUSE THE BLUEPRINT TRANSFER OR EXPORT OF COMPONENTS
WOULD HAVE TO PASS THROUGH FRG EXPORT CONTROLS, THE
COMPANY WAS SEEKING A PRELIMINARY VIEW OF THE FRG BEFORE
CONCLUDING ITS ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE SOUTH KOREANS. IF

THE OFFICIAL ATTITUDE IS POSITIVE, THE COMPANY PLANS TO GET THE PROJECT UNDER WAY BY THE END OF 1978.

4. THE FOREIGN OFFICE TOLD US IT RECOGNIZED THE SPECIAL US ROLE IN SOUTH KOREAN DEFENSE AND, THEREFORE, IT DID NOT WANT TO GO AHEAD WITH FINAL CONSIDERATION OF THIS ARRANGEMENT BEFORE HAVING DISCUSSED IT WITH US. ACCORDING TO THE COMPANY'S PROPOSAL, NO SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY OR COMPONENTS (BY FRG STANDARDS) WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE DEAL; THE INCLINATION WITHIN THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND FMOD IS TO APPROVE THE PROJECT.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: STATEMENT ON US ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TANK PROJECT FOR TRANSMISSION TO FRG. THE FRG HOPES TO HAVE AN ANSWER BY FEBRUARY 6.
STOESSEL

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